

***Saxifragopsis fragarioides* (Green) Small**

strawberry saxifrage
Saxifragaceae (Saxifrage Family)

Status: State Threatened

Rank: G3?S1S2

General Description: Adapted from Elvander (1993): Plant glandular. Caudex thick, woody, branched, scaly. Stem thick, woody, trailing. Leaves basal, a few cauline, reduced, merging into sessile, linear bracts upward. Petiole $\frac{2}{3}$ to $1\frac{2}{3}$ inch, base expanded, membranous. Blade $\frac{2}{3}$ to $1\frac{2}{3}$ inch, obovate, jointed to petiole and falling from it, base tapered, teeth coarse. Inflorescence a panicle, 4 to 10 inches, open below and between dense clusters. Flowers more than 40. Hypanthium partly fused to ovary. Calyx lobes $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, spreading to reflexed, elliptic to ovate. Petals $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, obovate. Stamens 10. Pistil 1, ovary half inferior, chambers 2, placentas 2, axile, styles 2, fused at the base at least in flower. Fruit a capsule.

Identification Tips: This is the only species of this genus in our range. It may be confused with members of the *Saxifraga* genus but can be separated by the following characters: *Saxifragopsis* has leaf blades that are jointed to and falling before the petiole and its styles are generally fused at the base, whereas *Saxifraga* species' leaf blades are not jointed to nor falling before the petiole and the styles are generally free throughout (Elvander 1993).

Phenology: Flowers in June and July.

Range: Widely disjunct in Washington; known from northern California and southwestern Oregon. Known in Washington only from Chelan County in the Eastern Cascades physiographic provinces.

Habitat: Occurs cracks and crevices on cliffs and in rock outcrops and occasionally in talus. Surrounding forests are dominated by *Pinus ponderosa* and *Pseudotsuga menziesii*. Shrubs present include *Holodiscus discolor*, *Philadelphus lewisii*, *Ceanothus velutinus*, *Amelanchier alnifolia*, *Purshia tridentata* and *Symphoricarpos albus*. Native forbs present include *Cerastium arvense*, *Lewisia tweedyi*, *Balsamorhiza sagittata* and *Lupinus* sp. Elevations range from 1400 to 4300 in Washington.

Saxifragopsis fragarioides

strawberry saxifrage



©1993 University of California Press.

Known distribution of
Saxifragopsis fragarioides
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

Saxifragopsis fragarioides
strawberry saxifrage



Photo by Tracy Rush

Saxifragopsis fragarioides
strawberry saxifrage

Ecology: The species is adapted to the harsh environment of cracks in rock outcrops and cliffs. Its absence from areas with better soil development may suggest that it cannot compete with other vegetation under those conditions.

State Status Comments: The occurrence of this species in Washington constitutes a significant disjunction from the rest of its range. The 3 known occurrences in Washington are all located within a very small total area.

Inventory Needs: Additional inventory is needed in the vicinity of the known occurrences.

Threats and Management Concerns: The taxon occurs in generally inaccessible habitats but it may be affected by rock climbing, road maintenance, and herbicide applications.

References:

Elvander, P.E. 1993. *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*. Treatment of the Saxifragaceae Family. University of California Press, Berkeley. p. 1002-1011.



Photo by Tracy Rush